

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims

1. (Currently Amended) A guard for a crop collecting apparatus, the guard comprising:
a ~~substantially~~ straight elongate member ~~having tapered ends~~, each end having at least one mounting orifice formed therein; wherein the elongate member is coiled in an arcing configuration when mounted and returns to a ~~substantially~~ straight configuration when removed.
2. (Original) A guard according to claim 1, wherein the guard is adapted for mounting under tension.
3. (Original) A guard according to claim 1, wherein the mounting orifice has a countersunk portion.
4. (Original) A guard according to claim 1, wherein the guard comprises a polyethylene member.
5. (Original) A guard according to claim 4, wherein the polyethylene member comprises ultraviolet resistant stabilizers.
6. (Original) A guard according to claim 1, wherein the elongate member includes a plurality of mounting orifices.
7. (Currently Amended) A method of mounting a guard member to a head of a crop collecting apparatus, the method comprising the steps of:
providing a substantially straight elongate guard member having mounting means at a first end and a second end;
mounting the first end to the crop collecting apparatus;

~~coiling~~ bending the guard member in an arcuate configuration around a portion of the head;

mounting the second end to the crop collecting apparatus.

8. (Original) A mounting method according to claim 7, wherein the guard member is mounted under tension.
9. (Original) A mounting method according to claim 8, wherein the mounting means comprise ends with orifices formed therein.
10. (Currently Amended) A crop collection apparatus, comprising:
a frame;
wheels mounted to the frame;
a pick up head supported on the frame and having a rotatable reel;
a plurality of tines mounted to the reel;
a housing extending around the reel, including a plurality of guards, wherein the guards are intermediate adjacent tines and alternate with the tines, and wherein the guards comprise substantially straight elongate members bent around the reel when mounted.
11. (Original) A crop collection apparatus according to claim 10, wherein the guards are under tension when mounted.
12. (Original) A crop collection apparatus according to claim 10, wherein the elongate members include mounting orifices with countersunk portions.
13. (Currently Amended) A crop collection apparatus according to claim 9 10, wherein the elongate members comprise polyethylene.
14. (Original) A crop collection apparatus according to claim 13, wherein the elongate members comprise an ultraviolet resistant material.

15. (Original) A crop collection apparatus according to claim 13, wherein the elongate members comprise ultra-high molecular weight polyethylene.

16. (Original) A crop collection apparatus according to claim 10, wherein the elongate members includes a plurality of mounting orifices.

17. (Currently Amended) A method for accessing a crop collection reel, the reel having an axle and at least one guard mounted at a first end and a second end in a flexed condition arcing around a portion of the reel under tension, the method comprising the steps of:

detaching only the first end of the guard and releasing the first end of the guard, wherein the guard returns to a straight configuration upon release of the first end, pulling the guard from around the axle and extending outward from the attached second end.

18. (Original) A crop collecting reel for mounting to a crop collection apparatus, the reel comprising:

an arbor;

a plurality of tines, including tine sets having tines spaced apart radially around the arbor, wherein the tine sets are axially spaced along the arbor;

a housing comprising a plurality of substantially straight elongate guards intermediate adjacent tine sets, wherein the guards are configured for mounting to the crop collection apparatus in an arcing configuration.

19. (New) A crop collecting reel according to claim 18, wherein each of the guards returns to a substantially straight configuration when one end of the guard is released.

20. (New) A crop collection apparatus according to claim 10, wherein each of the guards returns to a substantially straight configuration when one end of the guard is released.

21. (New) A guard according to claim 1, wherein the guard comprises a rounded end.

22. (New) A guard according to claim 1, wherein the guard comprises a tapered end.